

opinions which is requisite to the character in question, till it is conscious of acquiring them from an exercise of thought Continued on to its result. The habit of thinking thus completely is indispensable to the general character of decision ; and in any particular instance, it is found that short-pieces of courses of reasoning, though correct as far as they go, are inadequate to make a man master of the immediate concern. They are besides of little value for aid to future thinking ; because from being left thus incomplete they are but slightly retained by the mind, and soon sink away; in the same manner as the walls of a structure left unfinished speedily moulder.

After these remarks, I should take occasion to observe, that a vigorous exercise of thought may sometimes for a while seem to increase the difficulty of decision, by discovering a great number of unthought-of reasons for a measure and against it, so that the most discriminating mind may, during a short space, find itself in the state of the magnetic needle under the equator. But no case in the world can really have a perfect equality of opposite reasons ; nor will it long appear to have it, in the estimate of a clear and well-disciplined intellect, which after some time will ascertain, though the difference is small, which side of the question has ten, and which has but nine. At any rate, this is the mind to come nearest in the approximation.

Another thing that would powerfully assist toward complete decision, both in the particular instance, and in the general spirit of the character, is for a man to place himself in a situation analogous to that in which Cassar placed his soldiers, when he burnt the ships which brought them to land. If his judgment is *really* decided, let him commit himself irretrievably, by doing something which shall oblige him to do more, which shall lay on him the necessity of doing all. If a man resolves as a general intention to be a philanthropist, I would say to him, form some actual plan of philanthropy, and begin the execution of it to-morrow (if I may not *say to-day*), so explicitly that you cannot relinquish it without becoming degraded even in your own estimation. If a man would be a hero, let him, if it be possible to find a good cause in arms, go presently to the camp. If a man is desirous of a travelling adventure through distant countries, and deliberately approves both his purpose and his